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LETTERS.

ABC ON LAMPHERE'S NEWS

New York City

It is worth noting that for thirty years William A. Reuben ["ABC's Old News," *The Nation*, June 19] has promoted, in books, articles and speeches, the notions that no significant atomic secrets were ever stolen by American spies working for the Soviet Union and that cold war spies—Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, among others—were innocent. His book, *The Atom Spy Hoax*, contains some extraordinary assertions that contradict the analyses of British, Canadian and American intelligence agencies and denigrate the work of the Justice Department and the American judicial system. The Rosenberg case alone went to the U.S. Supreme Court seven times, was appealed twenty-three times and had been considered by 112 judges as of 1973.

With regard to Reuben's charges about former F.B.I. agent Robert Lamphere and ABC News presenting "old news": Lamphere supervised a secret code operation and was the liaison with the Army Security Agency, now known as the National Security Agency, from 1948 to 1955. He says he has "never spoken on or off the record about the broken K.G.B. code in relation to the Rosenberg case" until he spoke to ABC News. Stories about the code began to circulate in 1977, when Lamphere tried to get government authorization to write a book about the code operation based on his personal experience. In 1980 he received permission.

Two additional points: Lamphere has never been referred to in any book or article as a public source about the code in relation to the Rosenberg case; and author David C. Martin says he never spoke to William Reuben or said that Lamphere was his "source" in his book *Wilderness of Mirrors* as Reuben alleges. Lamphere's discussion of the code in relation to the Rosenberg case is eminently newsworthy—not "old news."

Finally, we used new film of the site where the code-breaking took place, not "an old film clip," as stated by Reuben. With regard to his comment that "the camera moves across the text of a book containing rows of numbers (not otherwise identified)": in the program, correspondent Marshall Frady says, "using raw data like this, supplied to it by the Army Security Agency . . ." The "raw data" was an example of the five-digit deciphered messages, similar to the messages sent by the K.G.B. in New York City to Moscow in 1944 and 1945 and used by the F.B.I. to identify Soviet spies. And Lamphere's quote, "We knew of the Rosenbergs' involvement with the Soviet Union through

People who worked for Lamphere led me to him as the "best authority."

I suggested to Reuben and Marshall Perlin, the attorney for the Rosenberg children, that they speak with Lamphere or his publisher, Random House, about their problems with the code story and the Rosenberg case. Neither Random House nor Lamphere heard from Perlin or Reuben.

We feel that Lamphere's statement was corroborated and was sufficiently important because of his role as F.B.I. supervisor of the code operation to bring to the attention of the American people.

Patricia K. Lynch
Investigative Reporter
ABC News Closeup
"J. Edgar Hoover"

REUBEN REPLIES

New York City

Although I fail to see the relevance of Patricia Lynch's reference to what I wrote thirty-one years ago, if it is worth noting it is worth getting the facts straight. I never claimed that "no significant atomic secrets were ever stolen by American spies." It was only after four years of research and study, including interviews with Albert Einstein, Harold Urey, Linus Pauling, Harlow Shapley and many other distinguished scientists, and only with the publication of my book *The Atom Spy Hoax* in 1955, that I first raised questions as to whether there was such a thing as a "secret of the A-bomb" to be stolen.

I assume the reason for Lynch's *ad hominem* attack is that she is unable to challenge my key point—that ABC's story was "old news." She claims that Robert Lamphere says he has "never spoken on or off the record about the broken K.G.B. code," but in both the 1977 Associated Press dispatch and the 1980 *Newsweek* story referred to in my article, he is the only person mentioned or cited. Lynch also claims that "author David C. Martin says he never spoke to William Reuben or said that Lamphere was his 'source' in his book *Wilderness of Mirrors*." I never claimed that I spoke to Martin; I said only that he had omitted Lamphere's name as his source for the book. In 1980, Martin published articles in *Playboy* and *Newsweek* dealing with the broken codes and the Rosenbergs; and he has acknowledged (as I wrote) Lamphere as his source for the story.

As for the program itself, I don't know what Lynch is complaining about. A film of the exterior of a building—whether it is "new film" or "an old film clip"—is scarcely proof of anything. Having the camera

As for Lamphere, he is still ABC's only identifiable source. The program did not say if it was he who made the claim, swallowed whole by ABC, that 200 Soviet spies were arrested as a result of the broken code; in any event, this wild charge has never been made on the record by any government agency, nor has anything been published over the past thirty-five years to provide a clue to the identities of these phantoms. And what Lamphere said on camera falls far short of what Lynch, Frady and ABC's press department attribute to him.

Lynch's lumping together of me and Marshall Perlin seems to be a sort of guilt-by-association-with-the-lawyer-of-the-children-of-the-Rosenbergs. As to why I didn't call Lamphere or Random House, Lynch told me that his book was a year and a half away from completion and that he was not available for comment, as he was "in transit" from Massachusetts to the West Coast.

Finally, although neither ABC's documentary nor my article discussed the evidence in the Rosenberg case, Lynch says that the case "went to the U.S. Supreme Court seven times, was appealed twenty-three times and had been considered by 112 judges as of 1973." Very impressive, but very false and misleading, as is the unacknowledged source for these figures, Louis Nizer's 1973 book, *The Implosion Conspiracy*. What Justice Hugo Black said on June 19, 1953, the day of the executions, is more apposite: "It is not amiss to point out that this Court has never reviewed this record and has never affirmed the fairness of the trial below. Without an affirmance of the fairness of the trial by the highest court of the land, there may always be questions as to whether these executions were legally and rightfully carried out. I would still grant certiorari and let this Court approve or disapprove the fairness of the trial."

William A. Reuben